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Study: Violence Remains Common in TV Programming

Despite earlier warnings about its prevalence and danger, glamorized and sanitized violence continues to be a staple of television programming, according to scholars at UC Santa Barbara and three other universities in a report issued today.

Concluding the most extensive study of its kind ever undertaken, researchers have found that the portrayal of negative consequences resulting from violence and the depiction of pain and harm to victims remain largely absent from TV shows. The results were revealed in the third and final yearly report issued as part of the UCSB-based National Television Violence Study (NTVS).

"For the third straight year, we find that much of the violence on television poses risks to the audience. Violence continues to be depicted in ways that encourage the learning of aggression, desensitization, and fear among viewers," said Barbara Wilson, a professor of communication at UCSB and a senior NTVS researcher.

In one of the study's more troubling findings, researchers discovered that the proportion of prime-time programs with violent content on the broadcast networks and on basic cable actually increased over the course of the study. During prime time, the three-hour period that draws the most viewers each night, the number of broadcast network programs containing violence rose 14 percent.

About UC Santa Barbara

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